

kids talk

Keeping you connected!



When the supporter **NEEDS SUPPORT**

As the sole source of emotional support for his distraught girlfriend, Josh* was mentally and emotionally depleted. His girlfriend had become increasingly removed from school and friends – everyone except Josh.

She stopped coming to school. She called Josh during class and at all hours of the day or night. She expected him to talk to her no matter the time of day, even at two or three o'clock in the morning.

After four or five months of this behaviour with no end in sight, Josh was exhausted and unsure of what to do. He suggested they end the relationship, and she threatened to kill herself.

That's when he called Kids Help Phone and got counsellor Caitlin on the line. Along with being worried about his

girlfriend, he was feeling trapped – concerned it might be his fault if she followed through with her threat.

Caitlin recognized that Josh was dealing with a form of emotional abuse from his girlfriend, who in turn was struggling with verbal and physical abuse at home.

Caitlin assured him that he'd done everything right. He'd gone above and beyond in his support of his girlfriend. He'd told others about the issue, including school counsellors, friends and parents. There was a lot of awareness about what was going on with his girlfriend.

The one thing Josh hadn't done? **Let someone know just how much he was being affected.**

Caitlin let Josh know how good it was that he was taking care of himself by calling Kids Help Phone. Then, she helped him construct a plan for his own support. She also helped him practice what he could say to his girlfriend, and reinforced that he should call 911 if he thought she was going to harm herself.

Josh left the call feeling more empowered about his next course of action.

Get in touch:

KidsHelpPhone.ca
1 800 668 6868

Kids Help Phone

kidshelpphone.ca

wesupportkids@kidshelpphone.ca

Donation Line: 1-800-268-3062

facebook.com/kidshelpphone

Twitter: [@kidshelpphone](https://twitter.com/kidshelpphone)

youtube.com/KidsHelpPhone



The power of words to hurt

Verbal abuse can often take a serious toll on youth mental health. The younger a child is, the more impact verbal and emotional abuse will have on their ability to function. Here are some of the possible long-term effects:

- Reduced ability to cope
- Internalized self-blame
- Overwhelming guilt
- Anxiety and depression
- Engaging in self-harm
- Decreased ability to problem solve
- Viewing the world in a negative light



The **IMPACT** of **ABUSE** on youth mental health

At Kids Help Phone we all too frequently hear from children and youth struggling with verbal and emotional abuse. Abuse can have a profoundly negative impact on a young person's mental health.

Thankfully, Kids Help Phone is here, offering positive, confidential, non-judgmental support to these children and youth – 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The most important thing these young people need from our counsellors? To be told that it's not their fault. To know they're brave and strong for seeking help. To understand they're worthy of something better.

Our counsellors offer positive reinforcement to combat the negative messaging many young people receive on a daily basis. We give them a safe space where they can talk, feel, express, cry and share. We encourage their inner voice to speak out. It's a voice that may have been pounded down over many years, locked away to keep them safe.

More than anything, we're here to **bear witness** to their pain and let them know **they're not alone**.



When home is HURTFUL

16-year old Adya* was on the verge of taking a medication overdose. She felt worthless and unwanted – tired of constantly being criticized at home and mercilessly teased at school. Struggling with these feelings, she called Kids Help Phone and was connected with a professional counsellor.

Through a risk assessment, counsellor Liz learned that Adya was holding the pills she was thinking about taking. Liz asked Adya to take them into another room so that Liz would know Adya was safe while they continued to talk. Then Liz listened to Adya's heart-wrenching description of the disparaging abuse she faced at home.

While encouraging Adya to identify ways she'd been coping until now, Liz learned that Adya's grandmother was a big support. Liz role played with Adya a conversation she could have with her grandmother to let her know just how bad things had gotten at home.

They also talked about immediate coping strategies, such as asking to be excused from the family supper table, where the put-downs often began.

Adya assured Liz this was the first time she'd ever contemplated suicide, and left the conversation with a strong safety plan in place should she have those feelings again.



“I'm not sure what I'd do with-out Kids Help Phone. I feel SOOO much better when I talk to the counsellors here. I'm still depressed, but I feel like things are beginning to get brighter with each passing day. Once again, thanks to the counsellor I spoke to the other night for helping me out, and to everyone else at Kids Help Phone!!!! :D :D”

I wish there had been SOMEONE THERE FOR ME

When I first learned about Kids Help Phone, I remember thinking: “Wow. I wish there had been someone for me to call when I was a kid. I really could have used that emotional support.”

I still remember how lost and lonely and sad I felt as an adolescent. I struggled with suicidal thoughts after hearing years of verbal abuse from my father and watching his physical abuse of my sister. So when I heard about Kids Help Phone, I thought, “That's a charity I want to be involved with!”

I've been incredibly fortunate in my life since moving away from home at the age of 18. I met my wonderful husband in university. He's been my constant friend and source of emotional support over the last 46 years. But I know it doesn't work out so easily for everyone.

I'm just so grateful Kids Help Phone is there today – offering support to kids suffering with the pain and anguish of abuse. In fact, my husband and I chose to become monthly donors because we feel so strongly about the need for this vital service!

- Lauri Sue Robertson, Kids Help Phone donor since 1997

Counsellor's Corner



Hey, I'm Kate and I've been with Kids Help Phone for 11 years. I chose this career because I grew up with a lot of discrimination. I remember even as a young girl wanting to help people who are vulnerable.

I've always been drawn to helping youth and I learned pretty early on that my voice resonates with young people. I'm able to connect with them in a way that makes them feel safe and gives them strength. I create a safe space for youth to lean into and let go of whatever is troubling them. I try to shine a bit of light into the dark places in their lives.

I often speak with young people on the phone and they say, "Wow, you really get me! How do you do that?" I say, "That's what I do. That's why I'm here. To connect with you and to help you. That's my role as a counsellor."

- Kate

THE SAFETY PLAN

At Kids Help Phone, our counsellors always try to end each crisis call or chat with a safety plan. It's necessary in calls where some form of violence or abuse presents a risk to the caller. First, the counsellor performs a risk assessment to determine the young person's safety in the moment. Then, after offering whatever immediate assistance we can, we ensure they have a safety plan with tools and resources for support after the call.



For some calls, the safety plan is pretty simple. A teenage girl struggling with a breakup might say she's going to take a bath or call a friend. For the more serious forms of abuse or self-harm, we might suggest they call 911 for immediate help. We always do our best to ensure callers have a next step they can take to stay safe until their emotion or overwhelming feelings subside.

Youth can also head to our website to create their own safety plan. Please visit: kidshelpphone.ca/Teens/YourSpace/Safety-Planner.aspx to see for yourself!

“Because of the advice I've gotten from Kids Help Phone, I'm feeling a lot better. I can even begin to see a positive future. Although I know I will sometimes have bad days, the good days make it that much more reassuring that change is possible. Thank you so much.”